

Fire Safety Policy

Northleach with Eastington Town Council

1. Policy Statement

Northleach with Eastington Town Council (“the Council”) recognises the importance of fire safety in the workplace. Good fire safety practices prevent and reduce the risk of harm to employees, councillors, contractors, and members of the public who may be affected by Council operations or activities.

The Council has formulated this Fire Policy to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation which outlines the responsibilities and duties of all people in the organisation.

2. Legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to England and Wales and covers general fire precautions and other fire safety duties in non-domestic property.

The Order places duties on the ‘responsible person(s)’ to ensure so far as it reasonably practicable, the safety of employees and non-employees by putting into place general fire precautions, and conducting a fire safety risk assessment, to ensure that the measures are effective and adequate.

3. Responsibilities

The Council as the employer is the “Responsible Person” for purposes of the Fire Safety Order 2005 and is accountable for fire safety management of the facilities under its control.

The Council is responsible for:

- (a) Protecting the safety of its employees
- (b) Protecting the safety of the general public on Council property or who may be affected by its operations
- (c) Protecting the safety of contractors and volunteers who may be working for or on behalf of the Town Council on our property or other premises
- (d) Having a comprehensive Fire Policy which is reviewed regularly and revised periodically or following major changes which could alter its effectiveness
- (e) Providing sufficient funding to meet its responsibilities outlined in this document.
- (f) Providing sufficient staffing, training and resourcing to meet legislation requirements and Council’s responsibilities outlined in this document.
- (g) Co-operating with other duty holders to help facilitate a cohesive approach towards fire safety throughout the building(s).

The Town Clerk is responsible for:

- (a) Preparation and upkeep of this Fire Safety Policy.
- (b) Provision of reports and recommendations which enables the Council to consider the removal or reduction of identified risks to an acceptable level.
- (c) Day to day oversight of the implementation of correct fire safety procedures.
- (d) Ensuring comprehensive induction training is given to new starters, and adequate supervision provided thereafter, on fire policy and procedures.
- (e) Reporting of fire-related incidents to appropriate organisations.

The premises caretaker/supervisor(s) are responsible for:

- (a) Familiarising themselves with and ensuring adherence to the Fire Safety Policy, fire legislation and organisational procedures.
- (b) Carrying out routine tests on the fire alarm system and precautions.
- (c) Completing the logbook and keeping it stored safely on the premises to which it relates (see [logbook](#)).
- (d) Reporting any faults found and concerns to the Town Clerk.

All employees are responsible for:

- (a) Good housekeeping, ensuring their workspaces are kept tidy and free of clutter, waste is disposed of properly, and exit routes from buildings are kept clear.
- (b) Reporting any faults or defects with fire safety equipment, hazards, or concerns they may have around fire policy and safety.
- (c) Checking equipment thoroughly to ensure it is safe to use and in good condition. This may include cleaning, maintaining and servicing the equipment if it is within the employee's job role, or arranging for it to be done by another party.

Note: Serious, wilful or persistent disregard of fire safety measures, legislation, regulations or policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

All visitors, contractors, and volunteers are responsible for:

- (a) Taking reasonable steps to ensure they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm through their acts or omissions.
- (b) Cooperating with any procedures that the Council may introduce as a measure to protect the safety and wellbeing of staff, contractors and visitors to the premises.
- (c) Ensuring they are familiar with the evacuation procedures, means of escape and fire assembly point location for the building they are in.
- (d) Assisting disabled persons with evacuation from the building where necessary.

Note: Room hirers will be issued with information and instruction on fire safety with their booking confirmation.

4. Fire Risk Assessments

The Government's fire guidance confirms: "a fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises".

Fire Risk Assessments will be carried out by a competent and qualified external company. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually by the appropriate committee and revised on every fifth anniversary, or following any major changes on the premises which may include but is not limited to:

- (a) A change of work activities and any activities that take place within the premises.
- (b) Alterations to the building, both internal and external, including building layout.
- (c) A change to or addition of any hazardous substances used or stored on the premises.
- (d) Changes to the use, area, type or contents of any storage spaces or facilities.
- (e) Changes to the occupancy of the building, especially where this includes visitors with mobility or sensory impairments, or who may be vulnerable.
- (f) Changes to the management of the premises or organisation.

Recommendations given in the fire risk assessment must be completed within the given timescales, with higher risks given the highest priority to rectify.

There must be funds available to complete recommendations in the fire risk assessment. It is the responsibility of the Council to provide for this in their annual budget.

5. Fire Action Plan

An emergency Fire Action Plan sets out the action that must be taken by employees and volunteers in the event of a fire, and to ensure the safe evacuation of the building. The plan should be communicated to all employees and visitors.

The Fire Action Plan for the Westwoods Centre is given at Appendix A.

Fire drills

Fire drills should be conducted in line with the requirements of the fire risk assessment. For the Westwoods Centre, this is a minimum of once a year, preferably twice. At other premises, due to the transient occupancy of the buildings, drills are not assessed as necessary as long as the other fire risk assessment recommendations regarding procedures and training are implemented.

Record details of the drill and any action points in the logbook. Details should include the day, date, time of alarm, time taken to evacuate the building, any observations and a debrief with all staff.

If the drill was not satisfactory, alert the Town Clerk so that appropriate action can be taken. This may involve referring the matter to the appropriate Committee. The timescale of the response must be determined in line with the severity of the shortcoming or failure.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

All persons who require assistance to evacuate the building should have a written Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), which details special arrangements for them in the event of an emergency. PEEPs are particularly relevant for some people with mobility and/or sensory impairments (visual/hearing).

Any employees or councillors who may need a PEEP should make their needs known. The Town Clerk is responsible for creating the Plan, and storing it safely in line with data protection laws. The Plan will need to be shared with relevant people who may need to assist that individual in an emergency.

6. Servicing and Maintenance

Fire safety equipment and critical equipment connected to the fire alarm must be serviced and maintained regularly by competent persons.

The Council will appoint a competent contractor to carry out the following duties:

- (a) Carry out Fire Risk Assessments
- (b) Service and maintain fire detection and prevention equipment (see table)
- (c) Maintain and test emergency lighting (see table)
- (d) Service of the oil boiler
- (e) Fixed wiring tests every 5 years
- (f) PAT testing on electrical equipment at appropriate intervals.

Record in the logbook details of all testing and servicing, along with faults found and actions taken.

Contractor duties are shown in bold in the service and maintenance summary below.

Staff will carry out routine tests on the fire alarm system and precautions.

System	Frequency	Method of Test
Fire alarm	Weekly	Test operation of different call points each week in rotation
Fire alarm and heat detectors if applicable	6-monthly	Service/ battery test
Emergency lighting – function test	Monthly	‘Flick’ operation of test switch or circuit breaker
Emergency lighting – discharge test	6-monthly	Switched on and left for duration of battery (1 or 3 hours)
Fire extinguishers	Weekly	Check equipment is present and seals are intact
Fire extinguishers	Annual (5-yearly)	Service (extended service)
Fire doors	Annual	Check that door closers are working, seals are intact and doors undamaged.

Regular informal checks will be made while the building is in use, e.g. checking that the alarm panel is operational, fire extinguishers are present, and escape routes are clear. Any concerns will be reported to the Town Clerk.

7. Record Keeping

The Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for enforcing legal compliance and will inspect premises and undertake audits. They will expect to see various documents when visiting an establishment:

- (a) the fire risk assessment,
- (b) the fire safety action plan,
- (c) a completed logbook (see [logbook](#) below), and
- (d) a record of any dangerous substances (see section on [COSHH](#))

Logbook

A logbook will be kept and stored safely on the premises to which it relates and will contain details (where applicable) of:

- (a) Fire alarm model details, testing, servicing, false alarm and evacuation events.
- (b) An up to date plan/drawing of the premises showing locations of call points, detectors and other fire safety components, e.g. a colour coded floor plan.
- (c) Emergency lighting testing and servicing.
- (d) Fire extinguisher inspection and servicing.
- (e) Emergency contact details for responsible people and key holders.
- (f) Fire maintenance company details and contacts.

COSHH

Substances potentially hazardous to health should be secured in the COSHH cupboard at all times when not in use (in the locked Cleaners Store).

The COSHH book must be kept up to date and reviewed annually, or when substances in use change, whichever happens sooner.

Note: Staff should not attempt to fight any fires in or around the COSHH cupboard, or where the substances are in use.

Smoking Regulations

Smoke-free legislation was introduced in England in 2007, banning smoking in nearly all enclosed workplaces and public spaces. Employers are required by law to:

- (a) display no-smoking signs in workplaces and work vehicles;
- (b) take reasonable steps to make sure that staff, customers, members and visitors are aware that they may not smoke in the premises or in work vehicles;
- (c) make sure that no one smokes on the premises or in vehicles.

8. Training

It is a legal requirement that all employees undergo basic fire safety training at induction and periodically thereafter, expected annually in most workplaces.

Staff assigned to be Fire Wardens (Fire Marshalls) or are undertaking the role of the Fire Warden, should attend a training course which includes: -

- (a) basic fire science, fire classifications;
- (b) practical use of portable fire extinguishers;
- (c) identification of fire hazards in the workplace and how to deal with them;
- (d) emergency action procedures, correct evacuation routes and calling the emergency services;

9. Monitoring

Monitoring of the policy and adherence to it, effectiveness of training and budget spent will be undertaken by the appropriate Committee, who may report their actions to full Council. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that monitoring of fire safety is part of the agenda.

The Clerk is responsible for overseeing the monitoring of day to day adherence to the policy and procedures, and should liaise with section managers to address any concerns.

Appropriate and realistic timescales must be put in place to address any shortcomings. The appropriate Committee must ensure that any remedial actions are carried out.

All serious fire safety incidents will be subject to investigation, with a report and findings presented to full Council.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Westwoods Committee, or sooner following:

- (a) Significant changes to the organisation, buildings, staffing or operations
- (b) An updated fire risk assessment
- (c) Changes of legislation
- (d) Serious failings of fire safety

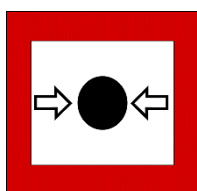
Following review, the revised policy will be issued to all staff.

This policy was adopted on 05 August 2024

11. Annex A: Fire Action Plan



If you discover a fire:



Shut the door to the room and activate the nearest alarm point



Leave by the nearest available exit



Report to the assembly point which is

In the car park in front of the building.



dial 999

DO NOT panic, do not run.

DO NOT attempt to fight the fire unless you have been trained in the use of extinguishers and are confident the fire can be dealt with safely.

DO NOT return for any reason unless informed it is safe to do so.

DO report missing persons to a responsible person at the assembly point.

Our address:

The Westwoods Centre
Bassett Road, Northleach
Cheltenham GL54 3QJ

W3W: clubs.expressed.balancing

12. Annex B: Test Procedures

Testing the fire alarm

The alarm must be tested weekly, with each call point tested on rotation.

Make staff and visitors to the building aware that you are testing the alarm, so that they do not commence evacuation procedure. Note: Alarms are connected to a monitoring station.

Ensure that the alarm sounds promptly when the call point is tested, sounders and beacons are working, and automatic fire doors release.

Check that the call point location and alarm panel response are satisfactory.

Record details of the test and any findings in the log book.

If the test was not satisfactory, alert immediately the responsible person. Agree what the course of action will be, who is responsible for it and write this in the log book.

Testing the emergency lighting

Emergency lights must be tested monthly. A flick test must be undertaken on all test points.

Make staff and visitors to the building aware that you are testing the emergency lighting, so they do not panic when lights go out. Avoid testing during hours of darkness if possible.

Ensure that the emergency lights come on when activated and that the LED light indicating the battery backup is showing.

Record details of the test and any findings in the log book.

If the test was not satisfactory, alert immediately the responsible person. Agree what the course of action will be, who is responsible for it and write this in the logbook.

Checking the fire extinguishers

All fire extinguishers (including blankets) must be checked weekly to ensure they are still in their correct location and have not been discharged or tampered with. Check that they are still within date and that any pressure gauges are within safe limits. Luminescent signage should be in place at each extinguisher location.

Record details of the inspection and any findings in the log book.

If the inspection was not satisfactory, alert immediately the responsible person. Agree what the course of action will be, who is responsible for it and write this in the logbook.

Final exit doors

All final exit doors should be checked weekly to ensure they are unobstructed and easy to operate in the event of an emergency. They should be in a serviceable condition and not require a key, code or specialist knowledge to operate.

Record details of the inspection and any findings in the log book.

If the inspection was not satisfactory, alert immediately the responsible person. Agree what the course of action will be, who is responsible for it and write this in the log book.